

SAMHSA's 2014 Native American Service to Science Initiative

Call for Applications

The U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is issuing a *Call for Applications* for the 2014 Native American Service to Science initiative. This national initiative—a collaboration between SAMHSA's Tribal Training and Technical Assistance Center (Tribal TTAC) and Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT)—assists tribal program developers, implementers, and evaluators in applying more rigorous and culturally-grounded evaluation methodologies to their work. Ultimately, the initiative supports tribal prevention efforts by increasing the number of programs that meet evidence-based standards.

We are specifically looking for **tribal programs that aim to prevent substance abuse** and related behavioral health problems or the underlying factors associated with increased risk for or protection against substance abuse.

Applications must be completed no later than Friday, April 25, 2014 at 5:00pm PST (8:00pm EST).

The Purpose of the Native American Service to Science Initiative

Over the last decade, SAMHSA has emphasized the use of evidence-based interventions to prevent substance abuse and address critical mental health needs. This emphasis is central to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework, a five-step planning model based on epidemiological needs assessment, capacity building, planning, implementation, and evaluation. SAMHSA also recognizes that many innovative programs do not have the ability to demonstrate effectiveness, due to factors including a lack of resources or difficulties conceptualizing and designing evaluation. Established in 2008, the initiative's long-range purpose is two-fold: (1) to support innovative tribal interventions seeking to demonstrate and document evidence of effectiveness, and (2) to increase the number and array of evidence-based interventions from which tribal communities can select to address substance abuse.

The Native American Service to Science Approach

Programs are matched with two expert evaluation TA providers—one from SAMHSA's CAPT and one from SAMHSA's Tribal TTAC—who work with program representatives throughout the Native American Service to Science process, starting with pre-consultation assessment (e.g., application review, pre-consultation questions) and through to the end of the follow-up TA period. TA providers are matched to programs based on program needs, TA providers' areas of expertise, geographic considerations, and availability. Using a relationship-based approach, evaluation TA providers take time to carefully listen to the needs of the program, provide non-judgmental and supportive feedback, and follow the program's lead in shaping evaluation goals and tasks. They demonstrate cultural humility, have extensive experience designing and implementing culturally relevant strategies for measuring program outcomes, and have a track record of working positively with tribal programs

- *Importantly, programs **will not be required to share their evaluation data or findings** with SAMSHA, the Tribal TTAC, or the CAPT.*

Benefits of Participation

Selected programs are invited to participate in intensive customized TA after attending the three-part *Evaluation Primer Webinar Series* (May 2014) and an on-site consultation (May, June, or July 2014). Programs may request up to 30 hours of TA from our expert evaluation TA providers to be delivered between June and October 2014. Tribal programs participating in the Native American Service to Science initiative receive various types of assistance from their assigned evaluation TA providers, tailored to meet their unique programmatic needs. Benefits of participation include:

- Access to evaluation experts as well as to others implementing locally developed and innovative prevention programs
- Enhanced and significantly improved program evaluation capacity
- Improved programmatic approaches informed by evaluation findings
- Greater quality of submissions to national, evidence-based program registries, such as SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP)

In previous years, participants have accomplished the following:

- National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors Exemplary Award recognition
- Application and acceptance to national evidence-based registries, such as SAMHSA's NREPP
- Professional presentations of program's successes at national conferences
- Publication of reports and journal articles documenting program achievements
- Additional funding leveraged from federal or other sources

Examples of topic areas for TA include:

- Developing culturally meaningful measures to document program effectiveness
- Documenting outcomes of strengths-based approaches
- Developing logic models that link program goals and objectives to outcomes
- Designing mixed-method data collection procedures
- Identifying, developing, and adapting appropriate evaluation measures and instruments
- Applying procedures to protect the rights of evaluation participants
- Conducting qualitative and quantitative data analyses
- Hire and working with an evaluator
- Exploring issues of innovation, adaptation, and fidelity
- Understanding criteria for inclusion in SAMHSA's NREPP

Eligibility

Eligible participants include practitioners or local evaluators who represent **innovative tribal substance abuse prevention programs** interested in demonstrating their program's effectiveness using more rigorous evaluation methods. These programs must **serve American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) populations specifically** and be:

- **Focused on the prevention of substance abuse** and, if relevant, related behavioral health problems. The program should *not* focus on the treatment of individuals diagnosed with mental illness or substance abuse disorders.
- **Innovative in design or focus:** These include *new* services, programs, practices, or policies that are distinguished by their creativity, originality, and utility. Innovative programs *do not include* existing evidence-based programs or combinations of existing evidence-based programs. However, existing evidence-based programs *significantly adapted* for specific population groups

or substance abuse problems with which they were not originally tested also qualify as innovative. Programs must also be first-time recipients of Service to Science services.

- **Responsive to local tribal needs:** These are programs that address local substance abuse prevention and related behavioral health needs (and gaps in service to address those needs) in tribal settings, as identified through the application of SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework.
- **Fills gaps in the prevention evidence base:** Nominees should be programs that address substance abuse risk and protective factors and/or problems for which few or no evidence-based prevention interventions have been developed. *Examples include, but are not limited to:*
 - Preventing or reducing adverse childhood experiences and related consequences
 - Addressing parental rejection and homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth
 - Incorporating cultural practices and traditions into prevention programming
 - Integrating mental health promotion with substance abuse prevention for high-risk populations (e.g., those who have experienced trauma)
 - Preventing prescription drug abuse and misuse
 - Preventing or reducing high-risk or problem drinking among adults (especially those not attending college)
 - Preventing or reducing marijuana misuse and abuse (in light of recent state laws decriminalizing marijuana use in general and for medical purposes)
- **Informed by practical experience:** These include programs developed with or informed by input from the AI/AN populations served and/or based on practical experience working with the populations in the setting in which the program is delivered. When organizations apply to the Native American Service to Science initiative, they must demonstrate that they are rooted in the community they serve.
- **Focused on alleviating behavioral health disparities:** Participating programs must target AI/AN populations affected by substance abuse, or by substance abuse associated with trauma and mental health problems.
- **Committed to evaluation:** Programs must be willing to dedicate the effort and time required to enhance the rigor of program evaluation. Programs must have a funding level sufficient to operate for at least one year and be ready and eager to build evaluation capacity. Based on our experience, programs that commit time to the Native American Service to Science process are more likely to achieve progress in building their evaluation capacity.

SAMHSA Priorities

In addition to the above criteria, SAMHSA is interested in programs that address **Goals 1 through 4 of SAMHSA's Strategic Initiative #1: Prevention of Substance Abuse and Mental Illness** (for more information on SAMHSA's Strategic Initiatives, see: <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA11-4629/01-FullDocument.pdf>):

1. With primary prevention as the focus, build *emotional health*, prevent or delay onset of, and mitigate symptoms and complications from *substance abuse* and *mental illness*.
2. Prevent or reduce consequences of *underage drinking* and *adult problem drinking*.
3. Prevent *suicides* and *attempted suicides* among populations at high risk, especially: military families; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth; and AI/AN populations.
4. Reduce prescription drug misuse and abuse.

Who Should *Not* Apply

- *Existing* evidence-based programs or *combinations of* existing evidence-based programs
- Programs that have participated previously in Service to Science
- Programs that lack the funding needed to operate for at least one year

Who We Select

From the pool of applicants, the Tribal TTAC and the CAPT will select up to five programs from across the country to participate. Programs that submit the necessary program materials, demonstrate a willingness to participate, have budgeted for program evaluation, and meet the criteria described in the sections above stand the best chance of being selected. Pending the availability of FY2014 funds, selected programs will participate in 2014 Native American Service to Science initiative training and TA events.

For more information, go to <http://captus.samhsa.gov/grantee/capt-clients/sts>

Examples of Prior Participants

Maajtaag Mnobmaadzid “A Start of a Healthy Life” (Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan): one of only six Healthy Start projects specifically targeting Native American populations; promotes comprehensive and accessible perinatal services and culturally-tailored substance abuse prevention programming.

Red Road Program (Red Wood Valley, California): provides a traditional teaching approach to recovery support by helping Native Americans transitioning from treatment centers and state or federal prison rehabilitation programs to maintain their sobriety by connecting to traditional roles and practices.

Red Cliff Wellness Curriculum (Bayfield, Wisconsin): a culturally-based substance abuse prevention curriculum targeting youth, families, and communities of the Red Cliff Indian Reservation by using traditional tribal teachings and small talking circles.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the 2014 Native American Service to Science initiative, please contact either of the following individuals:

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